

November 3, 2023

This letter is intended to provide guidelines for transmission line routing on or near Minnesota trunk highways. Please consider these factors when reviewing and planning new lines.

#### Easement vs. Permit

All utilities within MnDOT right-of-way are granted placement by permit only. Utility easements do not apply.

#### Clearance for existing structures, maintenance, and construction activities

For all appurtenances within the right of way such as light standards, type-A traffic signs, Road Weather Information Systems (RWIS) stations, etc., MnDOT will require a minimum vertical access zone of 10 feet plus the OSHA safety zone (Table A below) to allow for maintenance of these structures and any future construction activities. This minimum vertical clearance is needed to safely accommodate boomed equipment.

#### Clear zone Requirements

Clear zone requirements must be met for any structure on MnDOT right of way. Clear Zone widths differ and are dependent upon the traffic volumes, speeds, and roadside geometry.

#### Interchanges and separated grade crossings

Interchange areas are particularly important to keep clear of utilities due to bridge maintenance and construction requirements, increased presence of highway facilities, and traffic considerations. At ramped interchanges lateral crossings will be allowed at a minimum distance of 50 feet outside the interchange ramps. At interchanges with bridges over the highway, a safe distance for possible reconstruction or maintenance would need to be determined on a bridge-by-bridge basis. When bridges run parallel with the road, a minimum distance of 50 feet from the structures is required. [LRFD Bridge Design Manual - MnDOT \(state.mn.us\)](https://www.dot.state.mn.us/lrfd/bridge/design_manual/)

#### At grade intersections

Poles may not be placed within sight corners of at-grade road crossings where sight distance could be impaired.

#### Access

To the extent possible, access for construction and maintenance for utility work on trunk highway right-of-way should be made from utility or private easements. Aside from [Utility Accommodation on Trunk Highway Right of Way](#) permits required for construction, [Application for Miscellaneous Work on Trunk Highway Right of Way](#) permits are required for each maintenance activity within state trunk highways.

#### Lane Closure, Law Enforcement Officer and Advance Signing

Aerial Facilities will not interfere with traffic at any time unless prior approval from the District Permit Office has been received. Additionally, the applicant will notify the permit office at least 48 hours before a lane closure or for any other interference to traffic flow. The applicant will provide uniformed law enforcement officers with appropriately equipped vehicles to provide traffic control for aerial crossings of trunk highways. Traffic may only stop for five minutes, or as directed by the uniformed law officer. The applicant must use advance signing that conforms to the most current version of Minnesota's "Temporary Traffic Control Zone Layouts Field Manual" -

<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/trafficeng/publ/mutcd/index.html>.

### Single pole construction

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/8810.3500/> states that there shall only be a single pole line on the trunk highway right-of-way on either side of centerline. Collocation, burying and other efforts must be exhausted in cases of a second line proposal within highway right-of-way.

### Conductor Movement Envelope a.k.a. “blow out” zone or area of influence.

(The area that is affected by the sway of the line under wind and heat conditions)

MnDOT would prefer to keep all lines far enough from the right of way that this has no influence on the highway. Aerial encroachment due to blow out zones does require a permit from MnDOT.

### Crossings

Generally, transmission line crossings are allowed. MnDOT prefers that they are perpendicular to the roadway. The minimum height requirement for interstate crossings is 32 feet (MnDOT height requirement of 22 feet rural, 24 feet metro urban, plus the minimum 10-foot OSHA requirement).

### Environmental Stewardship

As a standard part of our permit review process, all applicable MnDOT utility permit applications are subject to review by our Office of Environmental Stewardship (OES). These reviews may result in additional construction criteria, additional resources, and/or a request to move portions of a planned project outside of any given area of concern.

### Vegetation

Anywhere inside the right of way, whether vegetation exists or not, as a minimum requirement, vegetation must be allowed to attain a minimum height of 35 feet. A vegetation management plan must be worked out with each District.

### Safety rest areas

MnDOT will not permit the physical location of utility lines or structures to encroach.

The vegetation requirements remain in force at rest areas and may be of a stricter nature for aesthetic reasons.

### Additional Factors

When planning any transmission line project that may affect Minnesota’s trunk highway system, early coordination with MnDOT is highly recommended.

MnDOT has the authority to dictate the specifics of pole placement within our right-of-way.

A Utility Permit from MnDOT is required for any line that would affect MnDOT right-of-way.

General placement for aerial lines is within the outer 5 feet of trunk highway right-of-way.

By Policy any utility placed within MnDOT trunk highway right of way by permit would be required to relocate at the owner’s expense if future highway construction necessitated.

The entire MnDOT Utility Accommodation Policy and Utility Coordination Manual are available at [www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/guidance.html](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/utility/guidance.html) and must be adhered to.

For issues involving airports, height clearances and restrictions, contact [aviationplanning.dot@state.mn.us](mailto:aviationplanning.dot@state.mn.us).

MnDOT’s main contact for Utility Routing and Siting Coordination of large energy facilities is Stacy Kotch Egstad. Stacy can be reached at 651-366-4635 or by email at [Stacy.Kotch@state.mn.us](mailto:Stacy.Kotch@state.mn.us).

Table A - OSHA Table of Minimum Clearances

TABLE A—MINIMUM CLEARANCE DISTANCES

Voltage (nominal, kV, alternating current)	Minimum clearance distance (feet)
up to 50	10
over 50 to 200	15
over 200 to 350	20
over 350 to 500	25
over 500 to 750	35
over 750 to 1,000	45
over 1,000	(as established by the utility owner/operator or registered professional engineer who is a qualified person with respect to electrical power transmission and distribution).

**Note:** The value that follows "to" is up to and includes that value. For example, over 50 to 200 means up to and including 200kV.

**MnDOT District contacts are:**

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PP = PRINCIPAL PLANNER

ADE = ASSISTANT DISTRICT ENGINEER